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DOMESTIC SCIENCE IN THE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

BY HELEN SAYR GRAY.

A PREVALENT idea of the study of domestic science is that it is the "fad" of learning to do what domestics do. That is so far as the definition goes, and in part it accounts for the prejudice or indifference manifested toward the subject. There is a large class of careless, apathetic, ambitionless women who are satisfied with the treadmill way in which they manage their homes. They usually consider themselves successful housekeepers, and would be incensed at any intimation that they are not. There is another class of women—those who have studied the subject of housekeeping and realize that the health, energy, morals, habits, manners, appearance, success and happiness of the members of the family depend on the home and deplore that so few women receive any training to fit themselves for the position of homemakers.

The ill effects of ignorance of household art and science are found everywhere, in homes, boarding-houses, restaurants and hotels. In thousands of homes the walls are covered with nondescript paper that is ugly in color and design and soon fades. The carpets and rugs are likewise ugly. The rooms are not living-rooms, but museums cluttered with rubbish—tinsel ornaments, fancy-work and pictures that ought to be in the wood-pile. In the parlor the upholstery is brocaded plush. At the windows are cheap lace curtains. The same amount of money expended on these things would furnish a house well if the owners had any taste or judgment; but with such walls and floor coverings, even if the furniture were beautiful, the place could not be made to look otherwise than cheap, shabby and cheerless. If,

however, the walls and floors harmonize a room does not need very much furniture and does not look bare even if there are only a few articles in it.

The women who live in such homes use no intelligence in their methods of doing housework. Like the Chinese, they prefer to do things as they have been accustomed to do them. They do not take it as a reflection on their cooking that their husbands seek to supply the deficiency at a saloon and that their children eat between meals at all hours. They use a cook-book that is years behind the times. It never occurs to them to be dissatisfied with it and get the best in the market. Much of the fruit they preserve soon ferments, but they learn no lesson from their failure. As frying is an easy and quick way of cooking, they fry meat and vegetables whenever it is possible. As no attention is paid to ventilation, the house frequently is saturated with the odor of the cooking. Verily, as George Ade says, "There is no place like home, and some men are glad of it."

By such methods they waste money and materials. They would not think of burning up dollar bills, but they do what amounts to the same thing when they spoil food in the cooking. "The natural flavors of foods are spoiled by ignorant cooking, and people who eat such dishes acquire a depraved taste that craves strong condiments," an eminent doctor once said; "the cheaper the restaurant the more bottles of catsup, Worcestershire sauce, mixed pickles and mustard there are to disguise the poor quality of the food."

Owing to the discomfort and irritation produced by their diet, children in neglected homes are ill-tempered. The daughters, accustomed to a slipshod way of doing housework, take no pleasure in it, but find it "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable." They "hate to cook" because they know nothing about cooking. People take no pleasure in doing what they know not how to do. Drudgery is doing over and over what has not been mastered. Any work when mastered gives joy to the doer. Since their homes are so unattractive and uninteresting, it is no wonder that girls want to get away from them. They leave school at an early age to enter a store or factory. When they leave the store or factory to marry, what likelihood is there of their having happy homes, since they are not qualified to do their share to make them so?

The appearance of the members of the family is a good indication of the kind of housekeeping they are accustomed to. They may be proof against mismanagement for a time and look rosy, but eventually they succumb. Bilious eyes, constellations of pimples, complexions like dough or dried apples, and the external symptoms of a hundred and one other ills are conspicuous evidences of the wife's incompetency and cry out, "Behold her handiwork."

Confusion and embarrassment at the unexpected arrival of company to dinner or supper are another indication of neglected housekeeping. Instead of being ashamed only of being caught unprepared, the housewife should be ashamed to sit down to a meal, no matter how frugal, that any one arriving unexpectedly could not be asked to share.

Most illnesses, moreover, come from improper food. A great deal of sickness in a family usually means inefficient housekeeping. Yet the wife never blames herself for the sickness or death of members of the family, but ascribes the untimely ending of their lives to an inscrutable visitation of Providence. Strenuous exertions are made and no expense spared for nursing, medicine and doctors to save the life of a member of the family who is ill; but the prevention of sickness through the study of housekeeping is disregarded. We are obsessed by a belief in the efficacy of medicine. If the schools had not been derelict in their duty we should not have had the worship of *Æsculapius* continued to modern times.

People whose food-supply day after day contains only perhaps eight or ten of the sixteen chemical elements of which the body is composed and seldom any of the others pay the penalty for not supplying in right proportion and chemical combination all the elements requisite for the growth and maintenance of their bodies; they are only fractional men and women. Farmers know what to feed cows to increase the quantity of milk or to increase or decrease certain constituents in it. Orchardists ascertain that pear-trees need iron, that quince-trees need salt; but no thought is given to feeding the family for efficiency.

The ill effects of bad housekeeping are as conspicuous in the country as in the city. Tradition has more weight in country homes than anywhere else. The law of evolution is very slow in its operation in the home, especially in the country, because wom-

en who live on farms are so out of reach. They do not try new recipes for anything except some dish they may get when away from home. Unusual dishes would lay them open to the charge of "fancy cooking" and, like demonstrative affection, are looked upon as unseemly. Pancakes, pie, cake, doughnuts, canned fruit, fried foods, bread, tea and coffee, with potatoes three times a day, are the chief articles of diet the year round. Then, sodden with food, the members of the family resort to patent medicines to cure themselves of their self-inflicted ills in an attempt to circumvent the law of cause and effect.

The boarding-houses, even the high-priced ones, in which one can get satisfactory board, are very few. In every establishment most of the boarders would like more hygienic living; but they know that if complaint is made they gain nothing but the ill-will of the proprietor. It certainly would not cost any more—in fact, not nearly so much, to manage a boarding-house with some regard to the welfare of the inmates. The reason it is not done is that the proprietors don't know how and are too conceited to learn. The meals served at the average restaurant and in "pure-food cafés"—or poor-food cafés, as they ought to be called—are as strong an argument as any that could be advanced in favor of the study of domestic science. Even a high price paid for meals in hotels and restaurants is not a guarantee of good food.

Women's clubs and the leading women's magazines are doing a work of inestimable value in arousing public sentiment in favor of the study of domestic science, engaging specialists to write on the subject or teach it and in getting it introduced into the schools. Those publications that employ the best specialists exert a very wide influence. There are publications, however, that have household departments in which some one who has an insufficient knowledge of the subject writes columns of pseudoscientific matter. Such articles on the care of a home are of about as much value as those that appear in the home department of an agricultural weekly, telling housewives how to make "jumbo pickles" and how to make footstools out of tomato-cans.

In large city high schools there is a half-hour intermission at noon, during which the students flock to near-by bakeries and buy for their lunch cake, pie or something of that sort. In a certain large art school where one or two women are allowed

by the authorities to furnish lunch to the pupils the menu sometimes has hardly anything upon it but cranberries, pickles, tarts and cream puffs. Knowing what sort of luncheon schoolgirls eat, the Englewood Woman's Club some years ago installed a lunch-room at the Englewood High School in Chicago to provide wholesome food at cost. A woman's club did likewise for the Lake View High School. Would it not be practicable, at least in the elementary schools in poor districts and in large city high schools in which few, if any, of the pupils go home at noon, to have served at school a luncheon prepared by the children themselves under the supervision of the cooking-teachers?

Magazines and newspapers contribute greatly to the education of the public in matters pertaining to the home, but they are an inadequate means. Household science and household arts should everywhere be introduced into the public schools. They are quite as important for young people to know as the binomial theorem or the doings of the Allobroges. Education in household arts and science can be spread more rapidly and efficiently by the public schools than by the home. Why should the teaching of household science be confined to the home? The home is not relied upon to teach other sciences. Where else, if not in the schools, are young people to come in contact with a higher standard of cooking?

Boys should be required to take some of the domestic-science courses. In the Elementary School of the University of Chicago instruction in household science is the same for both sexes until the children enter the high school. Thereafter the courses are optional, at least for boys. If all girls were trained thoroughly in the subject there would not be so much need for boys to study it; but even so it is well to teach it to boys. It helps to raise the standard of housekeeping and of health.

At one of the meetings of the Chicago Woman's Club Mrs. Lyndon Evans quoted some very significant statistics in a plea for the study of domestic arts and science. "Of the 24,000,000 women in the United States above the age of fifteen," said she, "17,000,000 are engaged in housekeeping, 3,500,000 in professional and mercantile pursuits." Is there any other business except housekeeping on the face of the earth in which so many people engage with little or no training to fit them for it? Women are trained for everything else they engage in, but managing a

home is thought to be so simple and easy that any one can do it well without previous training. Every woman thinks she could keep house, just as every man thinks he could be a successful farmer. Competency is assumed, not acquired.

The study of domestic science in the public schools by no means meets with favor everywhere among the parents. Some are indifferent and others sneer and sniff at it contemptuously. One affected, opinionated woman, when she heard, for the first time, that cooking was being taught in the schools of Boston, New York, Chicago and elsewhere, could not conceal her amusement. To her and others like her domestic science meant nothing but dabbling with cooking-lessons—learning culinary capers. Teaching it in the schools was to her a ridiculous absurdity. “I shouldn’t want Margaret to waste her time on cooking at school,” she remarked. “I can teach her that at home.”

“There is room for instruction in both places,” one of the women present replied. “There is more to the subject than learning how to prepare a few fancy dishes that taste good. When the mothers set out to teach the daughters to cook they begin with the making of cake, and usually the instruction ends there.”

Another woman, who went out by the day to scrub and wash, used to send notes to the teacher almost every week asking to have her daughter excused from school on the afternoons devoted to the cooking-lessons, on the ground that the child already knew how to cook. Both mother and daughter seemed to think that there was nothing more to be learned.

A teacher who taught only half a day employed her spare time on some courses in domestic science. Then she and her husband decided to set up housekeeping. “I feel sorry for him. His wife has been studying domestic science,” remarked a woman of their acquaintance. “At the University where she has been attending, the students make little dabs of this and that. I can see she doesn’t know anything about cooking.” The opponent of domestic science in this case was a woman with degrees from several colleges who was subject to frequent and very severe sick headaches brought on, as she herself admitted, by dietetic sins.

“Women don’t need to read books on housekeeping or study the subject if they have common sense,” said another mother, a doctor’s wife. “I was married when I was eighteen just after I left school; and my mother had never trained me to do any-

thing, as she did not have to do her housework herself. No one could have known less about cooking than I did; but I soon learned, for I had a good mind to help me out." What she ate for her meals showed very plainly the kind of housekeeper she was and how adequate was the "common sense" on which she prided herself. Common sense is not relied upon to furnish a knowledge of chemistry or astronomy. Why should it be in the case of domestic science?

Another mother, a wealthy woman, had her fourteen-year-old daughter excused from cooking-lessons altogether. "Emma will never have any cooking to do," she explained. "She will always have servants. I'd rather she would spend her time on music and art." To superintend servants well a woman must understand the work herself. Otherwise she is only a figurehead. The mother's argument is like that of the country school trustee's, when the question of hiring a college graduate for the village school was under consideration. "I don't believe in studyin' so many things. I don't want my boy to study joga'fy. What's the use? He ain't goin' to travel none. And as for payin' this man sixty dollars a month, I with a team of horses couldn't earn that amount in that length of time."

It is taken as a matter of course, no matter what is to be the pursuit later in life, that arithmetic must be studied. In days to come household arts and science will be regarded in like manner. Lessons in those subjects will begin when the child first enters school and will not be regarded as interfering with the study of music, art or anything else any more than arithmetic and geography do.

The teaching of domestic science is sometimes opposed by the women who serve on boards of education. Mrs. Keough, who was the only woman member of the Chicago Board of Education at the time "fads" were dropped from the schools in New York City, was reported as approving of the action of the New York Board. She was quoted in one of the Chicago papers as saying: "It is absurd to waste time and money in teaching cooking and sewing in the Chicago schools. Any girl can pick up these things at home; it would be better for the school to devote its whole attention to essential studies. It would be better for the school children of Chicago if they were given piano-lessons in the schools instead of instruction in domestic science and

household arts. The place for the child to learn cooking and sewing is in the home. I never knew how to cook or sew until I became a wife. It is better to get the culture first and the cooking and sewing afterwards." When asked what she would leave in the curriculum, she mentioned, among other things, physical culture. "I should leave that in, as it builds up the health of the child." How inconsistent to advocate leaving in physical culture, on the grounds of its improving the health, and yet oppose domestic science, a knowledge of which has far more effect on the health. Both are essential. Dr. Gulick, physical director in the New York schools, has shown, by means of tests, that physical culture as commonly taught fatigues school children more than any other of their lessons, and bores them into the bargain.

The effects of teaching household art and science in the public schools and of inspiring high ideals of home-making are incalculable. The improvement of the home is one of the greatest moral reforms and the greatest social reform to be brought about. It is the greatest social reform because it will affect every home. In books of American history this century will be characterized as the era of improved housekeeping, and the teachers of it as twentieth-century missionaries spreading the gospel of hygiene. Simultaneous with the great temperance movement that is sweeping the country is the spread of domestic-science teachings.

The instruction will begin in the primary grades and will be supplemented with sufficient practice to produce skill. By the time girls are graduated from high school they will have some knowledge of food values and combinations, of sanitation, of the warming, lighting and ventilation of houses; they will know what methods are best to use in doing housework; they will be able to sew and make garments, to prepare menus for the daily meals, and to cook simple every-day dishes without rendering them innutritious. Girls thus trained will make their parents' homes more attractive and their own when they marry.

When unwholesome foods are no longer served the chief cause of drunkenness will be removed. Considering the unattractive homes of most men addicted to drink, it is no wonder that the saloons have so many patrons. Last winter I met a woman who was going about lecturing on "Gospel Temperance." "Intemperance is one of the greatest hindrances to the spread of the

gospel," said she. "I speak in the churches and call attention to this fact and urge them for that reason to include temperance work in their efforts and not leave it to organizations outside of the church." She had a horror of fermented beverages, but the evils from fermented foods were a subject to which she gave no attention, though for years she had suffered from them and often was confined to her bed for weeks at a time. Whether one is poisoned by undigested food or by alcohol, the results are alike disastrous. Those who are sick from autointoxication are no less a burden to the community than those who drink liquor in excess.

When housekeeping is taught in the schools there will be fewer deserted wives. There are said to be eight thousand deserted wives in Chicago. The only thing astonishing about these figures is that they are not bigger, considering the number of ill-kept homes. How can the ties of family affection be strong in ill-kept homes?

It is said that the American race is deteriorating physically. This assertion seems to be borne out by one's own observation. How few people one sees who are perfectly well, and how many of those even have some ailment or other. And it is not to be wondered at that this latter class is so large when one sees the family dietary. Statisticians say that one-third of all the children in America die before they are a year old, and that the average age at which men die is thirty-five years. A quotation from Shakespeare, which is very appropriately printed on the title-page of a recent cook-book, tells us the reason: "Men die because they know not how to live." With improved housekeeping sickness will be decreased in direct proportion to the increase of intelligence and vigor and longevity added to life. People are beginning to realize that sickness is unnecessary and might be avoided by hygienic living, and they are coming to see that hygienic living is not, as is commonly supposed, something unpleasant; that it does not mean subsisting largely on breakfast foods.

The large colleges for women would naturally be expected to take the lead in introducing the study of domestic science, instead of being forced into line by public opinion and slipping at the end of the procession after the initiative has been taken by the public schools, the universities and numerous private institutions. But so far Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Wellesley,

Smith and Mount Holyoke have stood conspicuously aloof from the battle waged in behalf of household science. Meanwhile the study has been introduced into the public schools in many cities, into many of the large co-educational State universities and into the agricultural colleges throughout the West.

Since the colleges have been reluctant to make room for courses in household science, one is led to ask if they have supplied anything better in its place. Until quite recently the curriculum was overloaded with languages, and the majority of the students got little else. It cannot be argued that such education is of very much benefit to the victims of it. Unless they are self-complacent, the thought of what they have missed that they might have had must be a painful one. Courses are offered in epistemology and in the Scandinavian languages. Hours are spent on the topography of the Roman forum, determining just where the rostra stood, and months, even years, are devoted to theses on the Erectheum, the Particle "hoti," the Position of the Greek Verb in Subordinate Clauses, the Use of Certain Prepositions in Petronius, the Ontological Implicates of Practical Reason, an Epistemological Study of Presophistic Philosophy, Political Conditions in Venezuela and the Tariff on Putty! There is time for all this, but it has not been thought worth while to spend any time on the study of household science. Any schoolgirl knows what verbs govern the dative, but how many know anything about the foods that affect the body?

Whenever a student's health fails the only reason people assign for it is that "she has overworked." Work seldom hurts any one. It is the adverse conditions under which it is done that are harmful. A girl rarely breaks down from overwork, but because she was not properly fed or because inadequate provision was made for physical work, exercise and recreation. Many people are opposed to the higher education of women, because, they contend, it usually causes physical deterioration. That is a very short-sighted view of the case. Impaired health is not an inevitable consequence of a college education. Their campaign should be directed, not against the higher education of women, but against the adverse conditions under which it is obtained.

The board-furnished college student is something to "make the judicious grieve." How much longer will the outrage be perpetrated of providing foods poor in quality, spoiled in the

cooking and grouped together into execrable menus? The appearance of those who are most easily susceptible to such a diet is a strong indictment of the management. Pallid, anæmic students, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," with round shoulders and sunken chests, dragging around with an armful of books are a repulsive sight. If a student arrived in college in that condition the college ought to be a place where she would get over it and learn how to keep well. "A man must be a good animal before he can be anything else," says Herbert Spencer. But a glance at the undergraduates in colleges and universities, and especially at the candidates for advanced degrees, always shows some who are "fit only for the scrap-heap." Often the less the physical foundation the greater the zeal for learning. They have scholastic ideals, but not physical ones. There ought to be a vigilance committee to attend to such a case; but instead the university or college encourages her in her misdoings by rewarding her with a graduate scholarship or a fellowship or with a *summa cum laude*. Next she is caught in the lure of a Ph.D. She is "elected to be damned," but she does not realize it. The next you hear she has broken down.

Most of the leading colleges for women are enlarging the scope of their gymnasium work and have added corrective gymnastics. In so doing and introducing into the curriculum games and pastimes—golf, dancing, fencing, tennis, rowing, swimming, ball, bowling, etc.—they have made a marked advance. The introduction of games is a most salutary change, not only because of the physical benefits, but because of the social value of play: students become better acquainted in an hour of play than they otherwise would in a year. But games and gymnastics alone are not enough to safeguard their health.

In every school instructors are discharged for incompetency, but the managers of dormitories are not. If things were as they should be the college authorities would provide board for all resident students and put domestic-science experts in charge of the dormitories and student commons. There would then be a few places where dietetic crimes would not be committed. The aim would be to make the dormitory table a model. Limited funds might often necessitate the selection of inexpensive foods; but they would be excellent in quality and properly cooked, however low the allowance; intelligence would be used in making out

the menus. It would be a good plan to have several commons with board at different prices, thus enabling those students who pinch along on an allowance of two and a half or three dollars a week for table board to take their meals at the commons and yet not forcing all to live so frugally. Scientific management of the cuisine has been undertaken in the dormitories of several of the large women's colleges and co-educational universities.

It is strange, since multi-millionaries give so lavishly to colleges and universities, that they have not given money for the scientific management of student board, nor for the establishment of departments of household science. Once introduced, the courses in domestic science, at least some of them, should be compulsory. Otherwise the students who are planning professional or other careers would omit the courses on the ground that in their business they will not need to know anything about foods and cooking. Such a knowledge would be one of the best investments in vigor and success that they could possibly make. But they scorn and disregard everything except what they think pertains to their chosen work. Then when the goal of their ambition is in sight, Nature mocks them with an attack of gall-stones or nervous prostration or an early death.

If parents cannot afford to educate both sons and daughters it would be better to educate the daughters, because as mothers they have so much more influence over the lives of their children than the fathers do. But such a choice is not advisable, unless girls are given the kind of education that will justify such a radical departure from custom. Let women take up as much else as they like and as they can; but, whatever pursuit they engage in, they should have an adequate knowledge of house-keeping. To quote Mrs. Celia Parker Woolley, "The first duty of a woman, as a citizen, is to be a good housekeeper."

HELEN SAYR GRAY.